

Statistical bulletin

# Births in England and Wales: 2022 (refreshed populations)

Annual summary statistics of live births, stillbirths and fertility rates.



Contact:  
Megan Munro and Meg Lyons  
[health.data@ons.gov.uk](mailto:health.data@ons.gov.uk)  
+44 1329 444110

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Next release:  
To be announced

## Notice

### 23 February 2024

This is a scheduled update of the previous [Births in England and Wales: 2022](#) publication as the population estimates for 2022 are now available and have been used to calculate fertility rates in this release. The back series of fertility rates, and rate whether within or outside marriage or civil partnership from 2012, have also been updated using the most up-to-date 2022 population estimates.

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# 1 . Main points

- The total fertility rate (TFR) decreased to 1.49 children per woman in 2022 from 1.55 in 2021; the TFR has been decreasing since 2010.
- Fertility rates decreased overall and in each age group, except for women aged under 20 years where the fertility rate increased.
- There were 605,479 live births in England and Wales in 2022, a 3.1% decrease from 624,828 in 2021 and the lowest number since 2002; the number remains in line with the recent trend of decreasing live births seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- There were 2,433 stillbirths in 2022, a decrease of 164 (6.3%) from 2,597 in 2021.
- The stillbirth rate in 2022 decreased to 4.0 stillbirths per 1,000 total births from 4.1 in 2021; this is higher than the rate seen before the coronavirus pandemic in 2019 (3.9).
- The number of births outside of marriage or civil partnership remains higher than births within marriage or civil partnership in England and Wales; 311,306 live births (51.4%) were registered to women outside of a marriage or civil partnership.

Delays in birth registrations because of the coronavirus pandemic have affected 2020, 2021 and 2022 data. See [Section 5: Measuring the data](#).

## 2 . Fertility rates

### Figure 1: Total fertility rate (TFR) decreased in 2022

Total fertility rate, England and Wales, 1939 to 2022

#### Notes

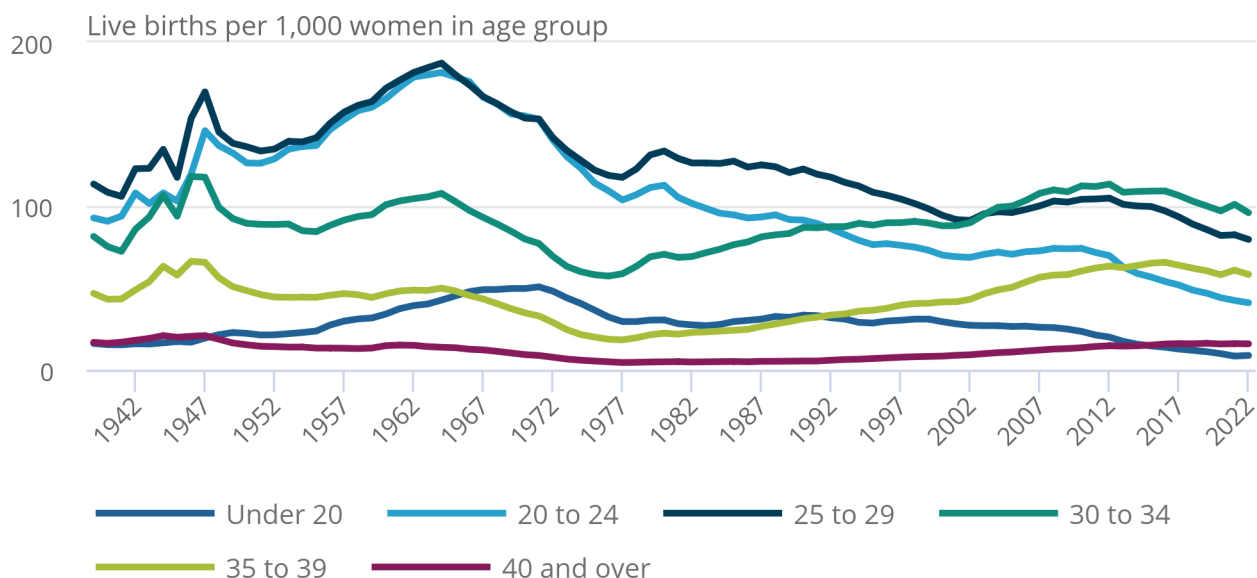
1. The total fertility rate is the average number of live children that a group of women would bear if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year throughout their childbearing lifespan.

**Figure 2: The overall decrease in fertility rate in 2022 has been driven by those aged 30 to 34 years**

Age-specific fertility rates, England and Wales, 1939 to 2022

Figure 2: The overall decrease in fertility rate in 2022 has been driven by those aged 30 to 34 years

Age-specific fertility rates, England and Wales, 1939 to 2022



Source: Births in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. For more information on the calculation of age-specific fertility rates see the [Glossary](#).

**Figure 3: Total fertility rate (TFR) by local authority district, England and Wales, 2022**

Notes

1. The total fertility rate is the average number of live children that a group of women would bear if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year throughout their childbearing lifespan.
2. Figures are based on mothers' usual area of residence, based on boundaries as of May 2023.
3. The total childbearing population in some local authorities is small so any small change in the number of live births can result in a large localised TFR change.

## 3 . Births data

### [Births in England and Wales: summary tables](#)

Dataset | Released 23 February 2024

Annual summary statistics on live births and stillbirths, by sex, age of mother, whether within marriage or civil partnership, percentage of non-UK-born mothers, birth rates and births by months, and mothers' area of usual residence.

Please filter the explorable datasets for births in England and Wales; 2022 data will be added as soon they are available:

- [Live births in England and Wales: birth rates down to local authority areas \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales by sex and characteristics of mother: national/regional \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales by characteristics of mother and father \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales down to local authority local area \(2013 onwards\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales for small geographic areas \(2013 onwards\)](#)

## 4 . Glossary

### Age-specific fertility rate (ASFR)

The number of live births to mothers of a particular age per 1,000 women of that age in the population. Useful for comparing fertility of women at different ages or women of the same age in different populations. The rates for women under 20 years, and 40 years and over, are based on the female population aged 15 to 19 years and 40 to 44 years, respectively. Age-specific fertility rates for 1981 are based on a 10% sample because of the late submission of some birth registrations caused by a registrars' strike. The population estimates used to calculate fertility rates from 1938 to 1980 are rounded to the nearest hundred and are therefore of a slightly lower level of accuracy than the fertility rates for 1981 onwards.

### Live birth

A baby showing signs of life at birth.

### Replacement level

Replacement fertility is the level of fertility required for the population to replace itself in size in the long term. In the UK, women would need to have, on average, 2.08 children to ensure long-term "natural" replacement of the population.

### Stillbirth

A stillbirth is a baby born after 24 or more weeks completed gestation and which did not, at any time, breathe or show signs of life. On 1 October 1992 the [Still-Birth \(Definition\) Act 1992](#) came into force, altering the definition of a stillbirth to 24 or more weeks completed gestation, instead of 28 or more weeks completed gestation.

### Stillbirth rate

The stillbirth rate is defined as the number of stillbirths per 1,000 live births and stillbirths.

## Total fertility rate (TFR)

TFR is the average number of live children that a group of women would have if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates for the calendar year in question throughout their childbearing lifespan. It is a better measure of trends than the number of live births, since it accounts for the size and age structure of the female population of childbearing age. The rate provides a timely measure of fertility levels and can be affected by changes in the [timing of childbearing, completed family size](#) and the population structure.

## General fertility rate (GFR)

The number of live births in a year per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years. Measure of current fertility levels.

A [more complete glossary](#) is available from our [User guide to birth statistics methodology](#).

## 5 . Measuring the data

The birth registrations dataset represents live births and stillbirths occurring in the calendar year, plus a small number of late registrations from the previous year.

Birth statistics represent births that occur and are then registered in England and Wales. Figures are derived from information recorded when live births and stillbirths are registered as part of civil registration, which is a legal requirement. Figures include mothers and fathers whose usual residence is outside England and Wales. These data represent the most complete data source available.

The registration of births is a service carried out by the Local Registration Service in partnership with the General Register Office (GRO), in England and Wales. Birth registration is linked to the NHS birth notification within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to obtain the age of the mother where this was missing on the birth registration. It also enables the analysis of further characteristics such as birthweight, ethnicity of the baby and gestation of live births.

In this release we have included an additional dataset table, Table 4: Live births by month of occurrence, which has been brought forward from [Birth characteristics in England and Wales](#).

More quality and methodology information on the strengths, limitations and accuracy of the data is available in our [Birth statistics Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

Our [User guide to birth statistics methodology](#) provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to births, and includes a glossary of terms.

## Population estimates revisions and impact on rates

Mid-year 2022 population estimates have been used in this release to calculate fertility rates. These are the latest population estimates at the time of production and are Census 2021-based estimates. These estimates have also been used to revise rates in the back series to 2012, in line with normal practice following the decennial census.

Our article on [rebasings and reconciliation of mid-year population estimates following Census 2021](#) is available. Our [revisions policy for population statistics](#) is also available.

This release uses [revised marital population estimates](#) for 2012 to 2020 alongside the latest 2021 and 2022 estimates. This is to incorporate rebased mid-year population estimates for 2012 to 2021 to align with Census 2021 results. Please note, estimates of births within and outside marriage or civil partnership are calculated using [marital estimates](#), which are published with measures of [uncertainty](#).

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) and birth statistics

Delays in birth registrations because of the coronavirus pandemic affected the cut-off dates for our annual birth registrations datasets for 2020 to 2022. The differences are detailed in our [accompanying dataset](#) and in our [User guide to birth statistics](#).

## 6 . Related links

### [Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 17 August 2023

Annual statistics on live births including countries of birth for non-UK-born mothers and fathers.

### [Explorable datasets for births in England and Wales](#)

Datasets | Updated as new data become available

Datasets on life events in England and Wales.

### [Baby names in England and Wales: 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 5 October 2022

Most popular first names for baby boys and girls in 2021 using birth registration data.

### [Birth characteristics in England and Wales: 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 19 January 2023

Annual live births by sex, ethnicity and month, maternities by place of birth and with multiple births, and stillbirths by age of parents and calendar quarter.

### [Births in Northern Ireland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

Births statistics from 1887 onwards and baby names statistics from 1997 onwards for Northern Ireland  
Statistics and Research Agency.

### [Births in Scotland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

National Records of Scotland's statistics on births.

### [User guide to birth statistics](#)

Article | Released 23 February 2024

Supporting information for birth statistics, which present figures on births that occur and are then registered in England and Wales. Figures are based on information collected at birth registration.

## 7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 February 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Births in England and Wales: 2022 \(refreshed populations\)](#).